

Context Sensitive Committee Meeting Minutes

To: Attendees and Invitees Date: August 8, 2005

From: H.W. Lochner

Project: SR-12 Environmental Assessment
STP-0012(8)60E

Meeting Location: Escalante Community Center
Escalante, Utah

Subject: Context Sensitive Committee Meeting #3 (June 1, 2005)

The SR-12 Project Team and the Context Sensitive Committee held a meeting on June 1, 2005 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Escalante, Utah. The following individuals participated in the meeting:

Committee Member Attendees:

Allysia Angus, US Bureau of Land Management
Sharol Bernardo, Garfield County Travel Council
Jim Catlin, Wild Utah Project
Vard Coombs, Garfield County School District
Joe Gregory, Federal Highway Administration
Laurel Hagen, (sitting in for Liz Thomas) Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Keith Gailey, Boulder Town Mayor
John Mavor, Bicycle Community
Sue Mosier, Escalante/Boulder Chamber of Commerce
Rick Torgerson, Utah Department of Transportation

Committee Members Not Present:

Dell LaFevre/Clare Ramsay, Garfield County Commission and Ranching Community
Marlene Stowe, Escalante City Council

Facilitators:

Kim Clark, H.W. Lochner
Michelle Fishburne, H.W. Lochner (not present)

Project Team Members:

Tyler Robirds, H.W. Lochner
Andrea Clayton, H.W. Lochner
HG Kunzler, H.W. Lochner
Randi Shover, H.W. Lochner
Crystal Garstang, H.W. Lochner
Tod Wadsworth, Wadsworth Design Group

Additional Attendees:

Myron Lee, Utah Department of Transportation
Daryl Friant, Utah Department of Transportation

The following is a summary of the meeting (all italicized items were included on the original agenda):

1. *Welcome*

- Kim Clark of H.W. Lochner (Lochner) welcomed the attendees. She gave an overview of the new materials for the committee members' notebooks. The new materials included information regarding the vision and context of the SR-12 area and the agenda for the day's meeting.
- Review Agenda and Logistics
 - Ms. Clark proceeded to review the day's agenda. She informed the committee members that they would continue on with the exercise from the previous meeting since many of the members didn't have a chance to complete the committee exercise from meeting #2.

2. *Updates Since Last Meeting*

- *Committee Comments on Meeting Minutes*
 - Ms. Clark asked each of the committee members if they had any comments on the meeting minutes that they had received. No comments were given. A copy of the final meeting minutes were distributed to the attendees.
- *Committee Member News*
 - Allysia Angus stated that the interpretive sign master plan that is being conducted on behalf of the BLM will be complete in a couple of months. Kim Clark inquired whether there would be a meeting signifying the end of the project. Ms. Angus stated that there would be a review period. Ms. Angus also mentioned the SR-12 Scenic Byway celebration on August 27th and the grand opening of the Escalante Visitor's Center on June 11th.
- *Update on Project Activities*
 - Parking Lot Issues:
 - **Guidelines for maintenance activities:** To be determined with UDOT.
 - **Change in frequency of wildlife related crashes after fencing was installed:** Fencing was installed during 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 from approximately RP 62-69. Crash data is available through 2003. H.G. Kunzler reported that no domestic animals have been lost since the fencing project was completed.
 - **Addition of National Park Service (NPS) design criteria:** The NPS design criteria has been added to the SR-12 Design Criteria Chart. H.G. Kunzler noted that the NPS standards are based on AASHTO standards. More detail on this item will be covered later in the meeting.
 - **Perceived safety vs. actual safety:** To be determined.
 - **Utilities:** To be determined.
 - **Tourism:** To be determined.
 - **Crosswalks near Escalante High School:** To be determined.

- Proposed Wilderness Boundaries
 - Transparencies of the wilderness areas proposed by the Utah Wilderness Coalition and BLM have been done for the six segment maps. The boundaries that are printed directly on the maps are where the Wilderness Study Areas are located.
- Draft Purpose and Need Statement
 - A draft outline for the Purpose and Need statement has been created. The outline is currently undergoing a review process by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- BLM Signing Information
 - Refer to Allysia Angus' comment under *Committee Member News* for information regarding BLM signing information.
- Design Criteria
 - The design criteria chart has been updated. Design criteria will be discussed more in-depth later on in the meeting.
- Speed Study Update
 - The GRAMA Act must be utilized to gather specific information from the speed study that was conducted on SR-12. The project team is currently in the process of trying to obtain that information.
 - The posted speed limit is generally determined by the 85th percentile speed.
 - Jim Catlin asked how many roads in Utah are posted at/or above the 85th percentile speed. H.G. Kunzler stated that the project team is looking into that.
- Emergency and Public Safety Services
 - Kim Clark introduced the emergency and public safety services representatives to the committee. They are as follows:
 - Cindy Steed, Squad Leader – Escalante Ambulance Corp.
 - Sgt. Danny Perkins, Chief Deputy – Garfield County Sheriff's Office
 - Lt. David Excell – Utah Highway Patrol
 - Don Porter, Fire Chief – Escalante Fire Department

3. *Public Safety Services Presentation:*

- The project team asked the emergency and public safety service representatives to speak to the committee regarding their experience with SR-12 between Escalante and Boulder:
 - John Mavor, the bicycle representative on the committee, asked Lt. David Excell what the best/easiest way the large bicycle groups can get in touch with the Utah Highway Patrol so they can understand the rules of the road.
 - Lt. Excell stated that the cyclists have as much right on the road as vehicles do. He stated that there have been no bicycle fatalities but there have been accidents. The potential for disaster is always there.
 - Lt. Excell stated possible solutions for this issue would be to have temporary portable signing at the beginning and ending posts of the bicyclists route to alert motorists that there is bike traffic in the area.
 - The question of having a Utah Highway Patrol member escort the large groups was raised. Lt. Excell stated that the Utah Highway Patrol does not have enough resources to provide escorts.

- Lt. Excell stated that planning for large groups will help and that communication is the key.
- Kim Clark asked each of the committee members to introduce themselves and who they represent on the committee. She asked that each member ask a question, if they had one, to the emergency and public safety representatives. The questions/statements are as follows:
 - Laurel Hagen asked if this section of Highway 12 has a low accident rate, then why is this section of the corridor considered dangerous?
 - To answer Laurel Hagen's question, Lt. Excell stated that the average driver regulates their speed to match the potential danger and that is probably why there is a lower accident rate on this stretch of SR-12. It is the drivers that don't adjust their driving that end up with tickets or in accidents.
 - Allysia Angus stated that groups that are part of organized, commercial trips that make stops on public lands (i.e. campgrounds, hiking trails, etc.) must obtain a special recreation permit from the appropriate public land management agency. The size of those groups may vary. Large organized rides that are tied to a benefit and consist of tens to hundreds of riders must also get special recreation permits from the appropriate public land management agency if they go onto public land for any purpose. These large groups are also required to obtain a permit from UDOT. She suggested that the touring companies that organize the bike tours need to pass on information to their customers regarding proper use of the roadway.
 - Rick Torgerson stated that UDOT has a difficult time monitoring the bicycle groups. He also stated that UDOT is responsible for alerting the Utah Highway Patrol if an escort for a bicycle group is needed.
 - Sharol Bernardo suggested signs with flashing lights that state "Slow Traffic Along Route – March 1 through November 1" be placed on the corridor. Lt. Excell stated that signing is a UDOT issue.
 - Rick Torgerson stated that the large vehicle mix and seeing substantial growth in large vehicle usage is one of the issues the committee is looking into further.
 - Allysia Angus stated that large vehicles coming from Red Canyon turn around when they see the tunnels because they are afraid of hitting them. Permits are required for vehicles that size and they are informed ahead of time about the conditions.
 - Sharol Bernardo asked Lt. Excell whether they planned to patrol the area more during high tourist season. Lt. Excell stated that there just isn't enough manpower.
 - The question was raised as to how many sheriff's officers there are in Boulder and Escalante. Sgt. Danny Perkins stated that there is one officer in Boulder and one in Escalante.
 - Allysia Angus inquired as to what sections of the corridor the emergency and public safety members see needing safety improvements. Chief Don Porter stated that the area near Head-of-the-Rocks needs attention. Sgt. Perkins stated that, where space is available, bike paths, pullouts, and wider shoulders would address most of the problems on the corridor.
- Lt. Excell asked the committee if they are interested in the type of accidents he sees. The committee responded with yes. The types of accidents the Utah Highway Patrol sees on this stretch of road are car rollovers, car hits mountainside, car hits tree,

motorcycle tips over, car hits delineator post, bus sideswipes embankment - to name a few.

- H.G. Kunzler asked whether accidents reported by the Garfield County Sheriff's office get recorded in the state database. Sgt. Excell stated that they do not. The project team will add the accident data from the county to the state's information. Chris Hatch was named as the contact for the county.
- Kim Clark then gave an overview of the project and that the committee has identified the needs on the corridor and they are now moving into possible solutions. She asked whether there were any other questions or concerns the committee members wanted to discuss with the public safety services representatives. The additional questions are as follows:
 - Sharol Bernardo asked whether emergency vehicles will go off highway to attend to an emergency. For example, Hole-in-the-Rock Road. Cindy Steed stated that they would go if the road was well-maintained. She stated that Hole-in-the-Rock Road is maintained.
 - Sharol asked the public safety services representatives where they see a need for pullouts along the corridor. Don Porter stated that when there is an accident on the corridor emergency crews either have to close one lane or close the road completely. Pullouts are needed anywhere they can be added. He stated that anything to help get vehicles and equipment out of the road would be useful.
 - Vard Coombs stated that he has issue with motorcycles on the corridor. He said he never sees them go the speed limit and he never sees them pulled over. He inquired as to whether motorcycles are regulated like regular vehicles. Sgt. Perkins stated that they are regulated the same. However, there are areas along the corridor that law enforcement officers can't turn around to chase down a speeding vehicle – motorcycles and cars alike. He stated that the police end up becoming more of a hazard on the road trying to turn around and chase after a speeder than just the speeder alone.
 - John Mavor asked what the public safety services representatives would do to change the highway. Sgt. Perkins stated that he would put in a bike trail where the space is available, like in Red Canyon. He realizes that there is not enough space to put in a bike trail along the whole corridor between Escalante and Boulder, but anywhere one can be put in would be helpful. Sgt. Perkins also would like to see wider shoulders throughout the corridor. The danger to pull over in some areas is high and sometimes it is not worth the risk pulling someone over in those areas.
 - Allysia Angus inquired about right-of-way usage on the corridor by ATVs. Rick Torgerson responded by stating that UDOT has sent letters to all cities in Region 4 asking them to delineate a master street plan for ATV use. UDOT prefers to keep all trails outside of UDOT right-of-way. Mr. Torgerson stated that ATVs can be used within state right-of-way to get supplies and fuel but not to get from point A to point B.

4. *Revisit Committee Exercise from Meeting #2*

- At this point in the meeting the committee was broken up into groups of two in order to continue working on the exercise from committee meeting #2. The groups are as follows:
 - Rick Torgerson and Laurel Hagen

- Vard Coombs and Sue Mosier
- John Mavor and Jim Catlin
- Allysia Angus and Keith Gailey
- Sharol Bernardo and Joe Gregory
- The corridor between Escalante and Boulder has been broken down into six segments based on posted speed. Each group viewed corridor maps of each of these segments. They were then asked to look at the following items and determine what was appropriate for the area based on design standards:
 - Appropriate Speed
 - Appropriate Lane Width
 - Appropriate Shoulder Width
 - Appropriate Radius
 - Appropriate Vertical Curves
 - Appropriate Clear Zone/Clear Zone Treatments
- Committee members were also asked to identify possible solutions and constraints for each segment. The outcome of this exercise is outlined in an additional document titled *CSC Suggested Alternative Criteria*.

Break for lunch

5. *Draft Purpose and Need Discussion*

- The schedule for the draft Purpose and Need report is as follows:
 - Purpose and Need Outline: June 2005
 - Purpose and Need Statement: August 2005 (available by the next CSC meeting.)
- The purposes for the project define why the project is being done. The purposes have been identified as follows:
 - Preserve and maintain the human and natural environment.
 - Provide improvements along SR-12 which enhance and maintain the context of the communities.
 - Identify safety transportation improvements along SR-12 from Escalante to Boulder while maintaining the character of the roadway and scenic nature of the project area.
 - Improve UDOT's ability to provide "adequate" maintenance operations to sustain SR-12 as a safe facility for the public traveling from Escalante to Boulder.
 - Meet the varied transportation needs.
 - Balance the needs of the different modes of transportation on SR-12.
 - Provide "long term" solutions related to the travel demands and safety between Boulder and Escalante.
 - Clarify the goals, needs, regulations, and long-term plans of project partners related to the SR-12 corridor.
- The needs are a way of measuring "Have we met the goals?" The needs have been identified as follows:
 - Meet current and future changes in transportation uses along SR-12 from Boulder to Escalante.
 - Accommodate diverse transportation modes on SR-12, including: cars, trucks, RV's, buses, automobiles, motorcycles, and bicycles.

- Establish controls for varying speeds associated with the different modes of transportation.
- Provide solutions that address areas of high accidents.
- Accommodate several different user types on the roadway: local, commuters, tourists, trucking, deliveries, recreation, ...
- Provide for growth and change in communities in the project area.
- Establish collaborative efforts and potential commitments between BLM and UDOT regarding maintenance, right-of-way, and the future needs along SR-12.
- Improve appropriate existing roadway deficiencies related to standard safety criteria.
- Obtain sufficient right-of-way for UDOT to maintain SR-12 as a safe and cost effective transportation facility.
- Reduce the potential for impacts to the natural and human environment from the frequent “small, limited, short-term maintenance fixes” along SR-12 from Escalante to Boulder.
- Identify efficient borrow and waste sites for roadway maintenance and materials.
- Minimize impacts to the human and natural resources.
- All the needs will be a part of the document. All information will be accommodated. The Purpose and Need will be used to screen the alternatives. When screening alternatives, the questions to ask include: Is it feasible? Does it meet the Purpose and Need?

6. *SR-12 Design Criteria Discussion*

- On May 31st, the CSC members were invited to participate in a field review along with the project team. Following the review, members of the committee and project team hiked and bicycled the corridor to gain a better understanding of the area. A summary of that review is in a separate document.
- Guidelines have been established as national standards when it comes to designing a roadway. For the SR-12 corridor, the project team has collected standards from the following sources:
 - AASHTO
 - UDOT
 - US Forest Service
 - UDOT 3R's (Reconstructing, Resurfacing, Rehabilitating)
 - AASHTO Bike
 - National Park Service
- These standards and the range provided in the standards and design exceptions, or waivers, give flexibility in design based on the context and environment of the corridor. The context of the SR-12 corridor is different from one reference post to another.
- In the previous exercise, the project team had the committee members fill out a worksheet based on what the members believed would be appropriate speeds, lane width, etc. (See description under item #4 above.) The project team then compiled the results on a chart to determine the range of ideas from the committee members. The ranges are as follows:
 - For speed, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: 55-60 MPH
 - Segment 2: 30-35 MPH
 - Segment 3: 30-55 MPH
 - Segment 4: 25-55 MPH (some speeds are advisory for sharp curves)

- Segment 5: 35-55 MPH
- Segment 6: 30-55 MPH
- For lane width, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: 12 feet
 - Segment 2: 11-14 feet
 - Segment 3: 11-14 feet
 - Segment 4: 10-12 feet
 - Segment 5: 11-12 feet
 - Segment 6: 11-14 feet
- For shoulder width, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: 4-8 feet
 - Segment 2: 2-8 feet
 - Segment 3: 2-6 feet
 - Segment 4: 2-8 feet
 - Segment 5: 4-8 feet
 - Segment 6: 3-5 feet
- For radius, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: 35-60 MPH
 - Segment 2: 30 MPH
 - Segment 3: 30-55 MPH
 - Segment 4: 35-55 MPH
 - Segment 5: 35-55 MPH
 - Segment 6: 35-55 MPH
- For vertical curves, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: The current vertical curves are appropriate
 - Segment 2: The current vertical curves are appropriate
 - Segment 3: The current vertical curves are appropriate
 - Segment 4: The current vertical curves are appropriate
 - Segment 5: The current vertical curves are appropriate
 - Segment 6: The current vertical curves are appropriate
- For clear zone, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: The current clear zone is appropriate
 - Segment 2: The current clear zone is appropriate
 - Segment 3: 6 responded that current clear zone is appropriate. 2 responded that current clear zone is not appropriate
 - Segment 4: 3 responded that current clear zone is appropriate. 4 responded that current clear zone is not appropriate
 - Segment 5: The current clear zone is appropriate
 - Segment 6: The current clear zone is appropriate
- For vertical clearance, the committee's suggested range is:
 - Segment 1: The current vertical clearance is appropriate
 - Segment 2: The current vertical clearance is appropriate
 - Segment 3: The current vertical clearance is appropriate
 - Segment 4: 2 responded that current vertical clearance is appropriate. 3 responded that current vertical clearance is not appropriate
 - Segment 5: The current vertical clearance is appropriate

- Segment 6: The current vertical clearance is appropriate

7. *CSC Preliminary Alternatives Discussion*

- Allysia Angus asked if bike paths/lanes are added in some sections on one side of the road, how do cyclists transition to the other side of the road when the lane ends?
 - John Mavor and H.G. Kunzler stated that it would have to be made clear through signing. Jim Catlin suggested utilizing a pullout at the end of a bike path for cyclists to wait at until the road is clear. John Mavor stated that the signs should be very clear that cyclists should not cross the road until it is clear.
 - Laurel Hagen suggested separating the bicycle traffic from the motorists with a two foot retaining wall.
 - John Mavor stated that consistency is the key. Using a four foot shoulder width should be done throughout the corridor. He does not want to compromise safety.
- Kim Clark asked the committee members how they feel about removing rock to create wider shoulders or a bike lane. Jim Catlin suggested using a three foot shoulder along the corridor with a retaining wall that is built on the outside of the road.
- Kim Clark then asked whether constructability is an issue. Allysia Angus stated that some areas would be okay and some would not. It is all based on location – what is above you? Ms. Angus stated that she would like to see visual simulations of the solutions that have been suggested from a driver's perspective. What would it look like? Tod Wadsworth suggested first looking at what solutions are feasible and then look further into what they would look like from a driver's perspective.
- H.G. Kunzler stated that when looking at solutions, if an existing curve meets design standards for a curve within 15 MPH of the design speed, then the existing curve may be retained according to UDOT's 3R standards. Most of the curves on this section of SR-12 fit the criteria.
- Sue Mosier stated that the problem with the vertical clearance throughout the corridor is the perception. People assume it is not high enough so they dart into the other lane trying to avoid hitting what is above them. Laurel Hagen suggested using signs that state the clearance height so people will know how high it is.
- Jim Catlin suggested utilizing two speed limits on the corridor. One speed for cars and one speed for large vehicles.
- John Mavor stated that there is a problem with the posted speed limit near Head-of-the-Rocks. The 30 MPH sign appears too soon. It should be posted with a 60 MPH sign followed by a 30 MPH warning sign for the curve.
- Allysia Angus stated that the Hogsback warning sign is not in the best location. She also stated that warning speed signs don't seem to be as effective as signs for steep grades and sharp curves.
- Keith Gailey stated that the posted speed through Boulder is too high. He said it doesn't make sense to go 40 MPH through town and then slow down to 35 MPH after you leave the town. He suggested the speed limit through Boulder be 35 MPH.

- H.G. Kunzler asked what the perception is of foreign drivers. John Mavor stated that if there are a lot of foreign travelers, then the signs should be more visual so they can understand them.
- Kim Clark asked the committee if there were any additional solutions that have not been discussed or questions they would like addressed.
 - Tod Wadsworth inquired as to what the legal responsibility of the committee is. What is the liability if something doesn't get done?
 - Myron Lee with UDOT answered that the liability lies with UDOT.
 - Kim Clark stated that legal liability is the reason standards and guidelines are utilized when designing roads. Rick Torgerson stated that if exceptions are made to the set guidelines, there is a substantial review of that change. He also stated that UDOT is not just looking at the present, but they are looking forward as well. The project looks to fix and address issues now to accommodate the future.
 - H.G. Kunzler asked a rhetorical question of the committee that if their name was on the stamp of approval on design plans that get bid for construction, would they be willing to accept responsibility for safety? Would the recommendations that they put forth be in the best interest of safety?
 - Sharol Bernardo asked how the committee balances the need for safety with the aesthetic changes that take place. Kim Clark stated that it comes back to the committee's vision. Allysia Angus stated that there are many ways to answer the safety questions.
 - Jim Catlin stated that he would feel more comfortable if the project team and committee did not use safety and roadway standards in the same sentence.
 - Sharol Bernardo asked whether the committee will be liable for decisions that are made. Kim Clark stated that the committee provides recommendations and ideas but they don't make decisions. Therefore, they have no liability.
 - Joe Gregory stated that FHWA, UDOT, and BLM make the decisions and sign the document.
 - H.G. Kunzler stated that H.W. Lochner would not carry alternatives forward that would reduce safety.
 - Jim Catlin asked whether the forest service is involved on this project. Rick Torgerson stated that they are involved but they chose not to be a signatory on the document. They will be involved in the review of the document.

8. *Evaluation Criteria*

- Kim Clark stated that the most important questions to ask when screening alternatives and developing evaluation criteria are:
 - Is it feasible?
 - Does it meet the project's purpose and need?

9. *Context Sensitive Committee Business*

- *Status of CSC Goals*
 - The following items have been covered so far:
 - Context
 - Needs
 - Evaluation Criteria

- Design Criteria
- Possible Solutions
- Ms. Clark asked the committee members what they would like to hear more about at the next committee meeting. The answers that were provided are as follows:
 - Jim Catlin would like additional accident analysis. He wants to know if the accidents would be eliminated if the road changed. H.G. Kunzler stated that the team is continuing to review the cause of accidents and that additional accident data will be gathered from Garfield County.
 - John Mavor stated that he would like to see illustrative examples of what some of the changes may look like. He would like to see some of the alternatives drawn up.
 - Jim Caltin asked for information on the distance effectiveness of headlights.
 - Vard Coombs stated that some of the rolling hills need to be filled in because vehicles hit deer and cows because their headlights aren't effective in lighting them.
- *Next Meeting*
 - August 9, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in Boulder, Utah.

THANK YOU!

The previous summary is the writer's interpretation of the meeting discussion. If there are any discrepancies or items that need clarification or correction, please notify Kim Clark or Michelle Fishburne of H.W. Lochner.